

REPAIRING ST. BOTOLPH'S, BOSTON.—At a recent meeting of the leading inhabitants of Boston, an unanimous resolution was voted to have the parish church repaired, and as an earnest of the force of the resolution came to, the meeting at once subscribed 2,234 towards the object in view. The vicar, the mayor, and other gentlemen, addressed the meeting, and Mr. F. T. White, in course of his speech, remarked, that such works as that in which they were about to engage were deeply interesting, as links of by-gone times. The first record they had of the foundation of their magnificent structure, he found in an interesting statement on the subject of "Boston steeple and church," bearing date 1715, and which was as follows:—"The foundation whereof on the Monday after Palm Sunday, Anno. 1309, 3rd Edw. II., was begun by many miners, and continued till Midsummer following,—when they was deeper than the Haven by 3 foot, where they found a bed of stone upon a spring of sand, and that upon a bed of clay whose thickness could not be known. On the Monday next after the feast of St. John the Baptist, was laid the first stone by Dame Margery Tilney, upon which she laid 5*l.* sterling. Sir John Truesdale, then parson of Boston, gave 5*l.* more, and Richard Stevenson, a merchant of Boston gave also 5*l.*, which was all the gifts given at that time." He (Mr. White) would for a moment recal their minds to the date of that foundation—1309! Let them reflect upon the vast lapse of time which had since intervened! 500 years—more than half a decade of centuries, had rolled away since that stately pile arose on the banks of the Witham—and they could not look without honour and respect upon the names of those recorded as participating in so glorious a work for the interests of posterity.

BRADFORD MUSIC HALL COMPETITION.—According to the local Observer, the whole interior of the selected plan will form an area 153 feet in length by 76 feet in width, the height from the floor to the ceiling being 56 feet. It is computed that the floor of the Hall will seat 1,100 persons, the stalls 600, and the gallery 1,500, making a grand total of 3,200, exclusively of standing room. It is proposed to light the whole interior by a continuation of gas jets, about 2,000 in number, running round the bottoms of the massive roof-cornice, after the model of the Philharmonic Hall at Liverpool. The exterior of the Hall is in the Palladian style of architecture. The basement is rusticated with masks on the keystones, and having candelabra in recesses on the principal front. The basement supports colonnades of a Corinthian order, surmounted by entablature and balustrade. The height of the building from the ground to the top of the cornice will be 66 feet. The fronts of the galleries inside, and the columns which support them, will be of iron castings. The whole interior is designed for the introduction of polychrome decoration on a large scale. The second premium (20*l.*) was awarded to Mr. Dobson. We are sorry to hear that the committee have declined exhibiting the plans.

FURNACE FIRE-BARS—RAILWAY SLEEPERS.—A patent has been secured by Messrs. Cochrane and Francis for a new furnace-bar. They are formed of a V or U shape, the hollow being filled in with fire-clay, mixed with sand or ground fire-brick, to prevent shrinking; or fire-bricks of the exact size are cast to fit the opening. Also for a railway sleeper, formed with a basement-plate, with longitudinal ribs and recesses, to admit the feet of the chairs, which are kept in position by a block of wood; the rail is secured to this block by wedges and keys.

STATUE OF CALIFORNIA.—In the New York Literary World we find a letter from Mr. Hiram Powers, the sculptor, wherein he says,—"I am now making a statue of 'La Dorado,' or California—an Indian figure crowned with pearls and precious stones. A kirtle surrounds her waist, and falls with a feather fringe down to just above the knees. The kirtle is ornamented with Indian embroidery, with tracings of gold, and her sandals are tied with golden strings. At her side stands an inverted cornucopia, from which is issuing at her feet lumps and grains of native gold, to which she

points with her left hand, which holds the divining rod. With her right hand she conceals behind her a cluster of thorns. She stands in an undecided posture—making it doubtful whether she intends to advance or retire—while her expression is mystical. The gold about the figure must be represented, of course, by colour as well as form. She is to be the genius of California. I could execute this statue on a colossal scale in bronze or marble, and it might be placed upon a pedestal out or in-doors. Is she wanted in your city? It will be eighteen months yet before it is done. The block designated for it is spotless, and that is a matter of great importance to the effect of the work."

DRAINAGE OF KINGSTON, JAMAICA.—The fearful prevalence of cholera which has been scourging various districts in the island of Jamaica, Kingston inclusive, seems to have induced a determination to have this town properly sewered and drained. Mr. William Dredge, who is at present in Kingston, and Mr. Blayney W. Walsh, have been called upon to report to the local Board of Health on the subject, which they have accordingly done. In their report they propose to drain into main sewers with glazed earthenware pipes. The cost of sewerage and drainage they estimate at 9,180*l.* for the former, and 2,754*l.* for the latter. We perfectly agree with the reporters "that experience proves that the direct cost of keeping a town clean is not so great as the amount indirectly paid for allowing it to remain filthy,"—an axiom all the more vitally important in its application to Kingston, that while "in European climates, when epidemics prevail, dirt is dangerous,—in tropical ones it is death."

RAILWAY COMPENSATION.—On the 26th inst. a special jury assembled at Red Lion-square, before Mr. Under-sheriff Burchell, to assess the compensation, upon a notice given by Mr. John Glenn, a builder at Islington, to the East and West India Docks and Birmingham Junction Railway Company, under the 68th section of the Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, claiming 1,500*l.* for alleged consequential damage to houses and property adjoining the railway in Cambridge-terrace and Roman-road, Islington. It appeared from the evidence offered by the claimant that the injury complained of consisted of cracks and settlements in his buildings, stated to have been caused by the railway cutting; it also appeared that a sum had previously been paid to Glenn for the purchase of property in the neighbourhood. Upon the examination of the second witness for the company, the jury stopped the case, and, after hearing a reply from Mr. Lash, the claimant's counsel, and the summing up of the learned under-sheriff, immediately returned a verdict of "no damage." The result of this is, that the claimant has obtained nothing from the company, and has to pay heavy costs.

THE ECCLESIOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—At meetings of the committee of this society held on February 12 and March 17, the committee examined designs for the Middle School at Hurstpierpoint, for a church school and parsonage in Herefordshire; for a new church at Woodlands, Berks; for a church in Somersetshire; for a church at Bournemouth; and for the proposed church of St. John Baptist, Hobart Town. Mr. Keith exhibited the plate he has in preparation for the cathedral of St. John's, Newfoundland. At the request of the Rev. H. V. Shortland, it was agreed to devote the sum of 10*l.* promised by the society to the restoration of Little Maplestead, to the purpose of providing a screen. A letter was read from Mr. Ralston Cox, informing the committee of the progress of his wooden church, St. John Chrysostom, Delaware; and of the abandonment or alteration of most of the signs of an improved ecclesiological taste in church architecture in the North-western States mentioned in the last annual report of this society.

IRON SMELTING.—Mr. A. Barclay, of Kilmarlock, C.E., has taken out a patent for a peculiar arrangement of blast furnace, stated to effect a saving in fuel, time, labour, and expense. The furnace is provided with three tuyères communicating with the main cold air

pipe by vertical branches. Each tuyère has a triple branch, furnished with stop-cocks, one of which opens into a small end of a bell-shaped chamber, forming part of the furnace; while the other two communicate with it at the sides near its junction with the body of the furnace. Each chamber has a charging-place, closed by a double door, for the introduction of fuel while the blast is on. It is recommended, when erecting furnaces on this construction, to have the floor of the blast higher than the charging door of the puddling furnace, to facilitate the operation. There is also a claim to a steam cylindrical blower, which keeps up a regular blast by alternately filling with steam and condensing it, effected by any proper mechanical arrangement of stop-cocks and valves.

THE IRON TRADE.—At the preliminary meeting of South Staffordshire masters, it was found to be impossible to carry out a previous desire to raise prices in the spring, and fears were confessed that even further reductions might have to be submitted to. They still complain of the "immense over production" by the Welsh and Scottish furnaces, and especially dread the incursion of the Scots, although, as yet, the "prices obtained, considering quality and carriage, are not sufficiently reduced to allow of the substitution of Scotch for Staffordshire among our manufacturers." Orders for manufactured goods are said to be extensive in the district,—iron culverts for the metropolitan sewers inclusive. American orders for the raw material are exceedingly limited since the American merchants have ceased to dread an increased tariff on importation.

MEXICAN HOUSES.—Mexican houses are mostly all alike, and I will describe one, once for all. You enter by a large doorway, wide enough to admit a carriage, and find yourself in a large courtyard, or "patio," with the house built round it. Generally, except in large towns, there is only one story; when two, or more, the family commonly live in the first floor, and the ground story is occupied by warehouses, counting-houses, &c. Most houses have, in addition, a court-yard behind, which contains the kitchens and other offices; sometimes there is another yard, or "corral," behind all, which contains the stabling, and is large enough to accommodate a great many animals. All houses are flat-roofed, and paved with a species of plaster over the bricks. This plaster, in a short time, becomes very hard, and being polished with rough stones, until it is as smooth as marble, forms an impervious roof against the rain. Every house is furnished with immense long horizontal pipes or gutters, projecting over the street, and through which all the rain collected on the roof is carried off. During the rainy season, or in a good heavy storm, these pipes are so many cataracts, and it is impossible to walk through the streets without being half-drowned.—From "A Trip to Mexico."

SECRETS OF COMPETITION.—Many years ago, a competition was invited for a frieze for one of our public buildings. The committee, which, on this occasion, was composed of gentlemen of more than ordinary taste, found little difficulty in selecting three from the great number of designs submitted to their inspection. The gentleman to whom the third prize was awarded was much disconcerted, for he knew right well that his design was of first-rate quality, it having been a careful transcript of a drawing which the late Mr. Stothard had made him for the occasion. On mentioning his disappointment that he had not succeeded in carrying off the first, or, at least, the second prize, to the painter, the latter inquired the names of his more successful rivals, when it turned out that, like the three kings of Brentford, they had all been smelling at the same nosegay! The foundation for all the designs had been supplied by Mr. Stothard; but that which had secured the first prize was the first of the three he had executed. "He ought to have been the first," added the old man, "for he came first, and paid the best price."—*Art-Journal.*

ATHENS BY RAIL.—A French engineer has just set out for Athens to construct a railway from the city to Piræus.